

“What Is So Great about Typical, Anyway?” Celebrating Our Differences

Grade Level: Grade 5
Content Area: Social Studies
Time to Complete: Five or six hours
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1. South Carolina Curriculum Standards Addressed (T = Targeted, I = Introduced, R = Reinforced/Reviewed)

- Social Studies

I. Time, Continuity, and Change: History

5.3 The learner will demonstrate an understanding of the major developments in the United States from the end of World War II to the present.

5.3.1 recognize how events, people, and various cultures influenced the United States during this period (T)

II. Power, Authority, and Governance: Government/Political Science

5.5.2 describe diversity in the United States and its benefits and challenges (T)

III. People, Places, and Environments: Geography

5.9.4 discuss the causes and consequences of spatial interaction among people (R)

5.10.2 explain how people perceive places and regions differently (T)

5.12.1 compare and contrast the causes and effects of human migration (R)

5.12.3 investigate how cultures change (I)

5.12.5 use current events to analyze examples of conflict and cooperation (I)

15.13.3 analyze ways to make informed decisions regarding social and environmental problems (I)

2. Lesson/Unit Description

The idea for this lesson came from a poster I first saw on a trip to Germany. The poster is titled “Typical Germans,” and the three girls in the poster are all from refugee populations. There are no typical Germans today, just as there are no typical Americans. In this unit, students will develop an understanding of how and why people from various world regions are in many ways different from one another, but students will also see that those differences

are not necessarily bad. Students will examine ways in which cultures are both alike and different from each other, and they will consider how those likenesses and differences can affect relationships between cultures. Students will also consider the reasons why many different cultures have come into close relationship with one another, and they will examine some of the problems that can arise in such a relationship. Students will do some map activities and discuss the cultures in various regions, read and discuss together background information on cultural patterns and differences, interview people who are from a different culture than their own, and hold small-group discussions about what they have learned from these interviews.

3. Focus Questions for Students

- What factors may account for why so many people have moved from one country to another to live?
- What problems may be encountered when two different cultures come into close proximity?
- What are some cultural differences that you recognize among your classmates, neighbors, and friends?
- Why do you think some people dislike or fear someone from another culture?
- What are some negative ways in which people react or respond to people from different cultures?
- What are some things that can be done to help people from different cultures get along with one another in a more positive way?

4. Culminating Assessment

The students will integrate reading, map, research, discussion, cooperative, and interview skills as they complete this unit. As they gather their information and answer the focus questions, they will begin to devise an activity that will help create an environment in which the differences among people are celebrated rather than protested or feared. This activity will be culminating assessment for this lesson. Students will perform several role-play scenarios reflecting differences among cultures and showing how they would feel if they were outsiders in a particular culture. Students will evaluate themselves on their work, using the rubric that the class has developed for this unit.

5. Materials/Equipment/Resources

Included in this lesson:

- Venn diagram (attachment 1—can be used to make a transparency)
- “Circle Map 1,” handout about differences (attachment 2)
- “Circle Map 1” filled in, sample for teacher (attachment 3)
- “Circle Map 2,” handout about immigrants (attachment 4)
- “Circle Map 2” filled in, sample for teacher (attachment 5)

- teacher resource information sheet (attachment 6)
- “Individual Differences” handout (attachment 7)
- “What Is So Great about Typical, Anyway?” handout (attachment 8)
- “Stamping Out Racism” handout (attachment 9)
- “Sixth-Grade Classroom in Fürth, Germany” handout (attachment 10)
- “Fifth-Grade Classroom in Hanahan, South Carolina” (attachment 11)
- “Not Everyone Agrees” handout (attachment 12)
- “Student Checklist” handout (attachment 13)
- sample rubric for scoring the project work (attachment 14)
- list of books for the teacher to read aloud (attachment 15)

Also needed to conduct this lesson:

- globes and small maps for small-group use
- large world map for class use
- Internet research on various cultures or regions
- poster board for making posters with tolerance messages
- selected questions, developed by students, to use in their interview

6. Teacher Preparation

- Obtain individual copies of several of the books listed in attachment 15 so that students may use them in their small-group work after you have read them aloud to the class.
- Prepare maps of various regions from which people in your area have emigrated. Research briefly to be able to help students understand a little about the culture of these regions. Or allow students to research on the Internet to find cultural information.
- Make transparencies or duplicate copies of listed materials for each student or small group.
- Acquire a large world map on which students can place markers to denote which areas are represented in the extended group.
- Obtain and become familiar with background information on various cultural and/or protest groups. Make certain that you are familiar with the definitions of such words and phrases as “immigrant,” “emigrant,” “refugee,” “white supremacist,” “hate groups,” “intolerance,” “tolerance,” “sacrifice,” “diversity.”

7. Procedures

Teacher Activities	Student Activities	Assessments
<p>Read aloud several books on immigration so that students can get a feel for what it is like to immigrate. Some examples are listed in attachment 15.</p> <hr/>	<p>Listen carefully to the reading to learn what it is like to immigrate. Think about the conditions and what sacrifices people have to make to immigrate.</p> <hr/>	<p>Teacher observation</p> <hr/>
<p>Discuss the concept of distance as it is explained in the readings about immigrants</p> <p>Lead a class discussion about the places the students have traveled, the distance they traveled, and their personal experiences along the way.</p> <p>Ask how many students have moved from one area to another over a great distance. What was it like? Have them share their personal experiences.</p> <hr/>	<p>Discuss with the rest of the class what it is like to move great distances. Also discuss where some of your classmates or neighbors originated.</p> <p>Share the experiences you have had while traveling.</p> <hr/>	<p>Teacher observation</p> <hr/>
<p>Use classroom maps and globes to make comparisons between regions. If students do not know about areas discussed, allow them to research.</p> <hr/>	<p>Research areas that you do not know about on the Internet or in books. Discuss how regions are alike and different.</p> <hr/>	<p>Teacher observation</p> <hr/>
<p>Divide the class into small groups. Distribute the Venn diagrams (attachment 1). Explain how to fill out a such a diagram.</p>	<p>Discuss with your group the items to be placed on the Venn diagram. Make your own Venn diagram.</p>	<p>Teacher observation</p> <p>Teacher evaluation of the Venn diagram</p>

Teacher Activities	Student Activities	Assessments
<p>Discuss with students how they usually feel about someone who is like themselves. Talk about how they may feel differently about someone who is different. Have students work in small groups to fill out “Circle Map 1” (attachment 2). See teacher sample, attachment 3, for possible answers.</p>	<p>Discuss with the small group and the class how you may feel about someone who is different from you. Think about and talk about why these feelings exist. Fill in the “Circle Map 1” sheet as your teacher directs.</p>	<p>Teacher observation</p> <p>Evaluation of Circle Map 1</p>
<p>Continue the discussion of individual differences by reminding students about the stories you read aloud about immigrants. Have them look again at the books as a point of reference. Then give them the “Circle Map 2” (attachment 4). Have them fill in the circle map after discussion. See teacher sample, attachment 5, for possible answers.</p>	<p>Participate in class discussion about immigrants. Look back at the books the teacher read about immigrants. Think about what their life was like and some of the choices they had to make. Fill in Circle Map 2” after you and your group have discussed your feelings about the question “What are some sacrifices that immigrants must make?” Do you think it would be an easy thing to move to a new land?</p>	<p>Teacher observation</p> <p>Evaluation of Circle Map 2</p>
<p>Using the information contained in the teacher resource information sheet (attachment 6), lead a discussion about individual differences and about how one school in Germany has worked to solve problems that develop where there are groups of people with many different backgrounds. Lead the</p>	<p>Participate in discussion about how your class or school might do something like the school in Germany has done to help people get along. In your groups you might brainstorm a list of ideas about ways to help people understand each other better and get along better.</p>	<p>Teacher observation</p> <p>Informal brainstorming lists</p>

Teacher Activities	Student Activities	Assessments
<p>students in a discussion about what they might do.</p> <hr/> <p>Discuss reasons why people would want to immigrate to a country like Germany or the United States. Read together as a class the information on the handouts “Individual Differences”(attachment 7) and “What Is So Great about Typical, Anyway?” (attachment 8). Following class discussion, have students write a paragraph on what the poster means to them. What does the title “What Is So Great about Typical, Anyway?” mean?</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p>Participate in class discussion. Read the information on the handouts titled “Individual Differences” and “What Is So Great about Typical, Anyway?” Discuss what the poster is trying to say. What do you think the title “What Is So Great about Typical, Anyway?” means? Is there really a typical German or a typical American anymore?</p> <p>Write a paragraph on what the poster titled “What Is So Great about Typical, Anyway?” means to you.</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p>Teacher observation of class discussion</p> <p>Teacher evaluation of paragraphs</p> <hr/>
<p>Distribute the “Stamping Out Racism” handout (attachment 9) and have students discuss it. What is its message?</p> <hr/>	<p>Participate in the discussion. Decide what the message is on the two posters shown on the “Stamping Out Racism” handout.</p> <hr/>	<p>Teacher observation of class discussion</p> <hr/>
<p>Distribute the handouts “Sixth-Grade Classroom in Fürth, Germany” (attachment 10) and “Fifth-Grade Classroom in Hanahan, South Carolina” (attachment 11). Have students discuss what they see in the pictures. Read the information and discuss as a class. Have students compare and contrast what they see. A Venn diagram will do well for this. Have students answer questions as a group.</p>	<p>Participate in class discussion. Read the questions and answer them as a group. Compare and contrast what you observe in the two classrooms in the pictures, as directed by the teacher.</p>	<p>Teacher observation of class discussion and group answers to questions</p>

Teacher Activities	Student Activities	Assessments
<p>Assign students the project of interviewing someone at their school or in their neighborhood who has moved there from far away and of reporting back to the class on the responses they receive to their interview questions. Help students develop several sample questions to ask during their interview. You will need to get parent approval for the students to do the interview. It could be done in the company of the parent.</p>	<p>Conduct an interview according to your teacher's instructions. Prepare the responses and present them to the class as the teacher assigns.</p>	<p>Teacher observation</p> <p>Teacher evaluation of Venn diagram</p> <p>Teacher evaluation of interview presentation</p>
<p>Distribute the "Not Everyone Agrees" handout (attachment 12). Discuss as a group and answer the questions together. Assign role-play in which students come into contact with groups such as those mentioned in this handout. Assign the student to make posters containing tolerance messages.</p>	<p>In your group, create a role-play in which you and a friend come into contact with one of these groups. What would you say to them about the importance of individual differences and rights?</p> <p>Make a poster that has a tolerance message, based your group's thoughts.</p>	<p>Teacher observation of role-playing</p> <p>Teacher evaluation of the poster</p>
<p>Distribute the "Student Checklist" handout (attachment 13). Direct students to fill out the sheet.</p>	<p>Fill out the self-evaluation sheet and return it to the teacher.</p>	<p>Teacher evaluation of "Student Checklist"</p>

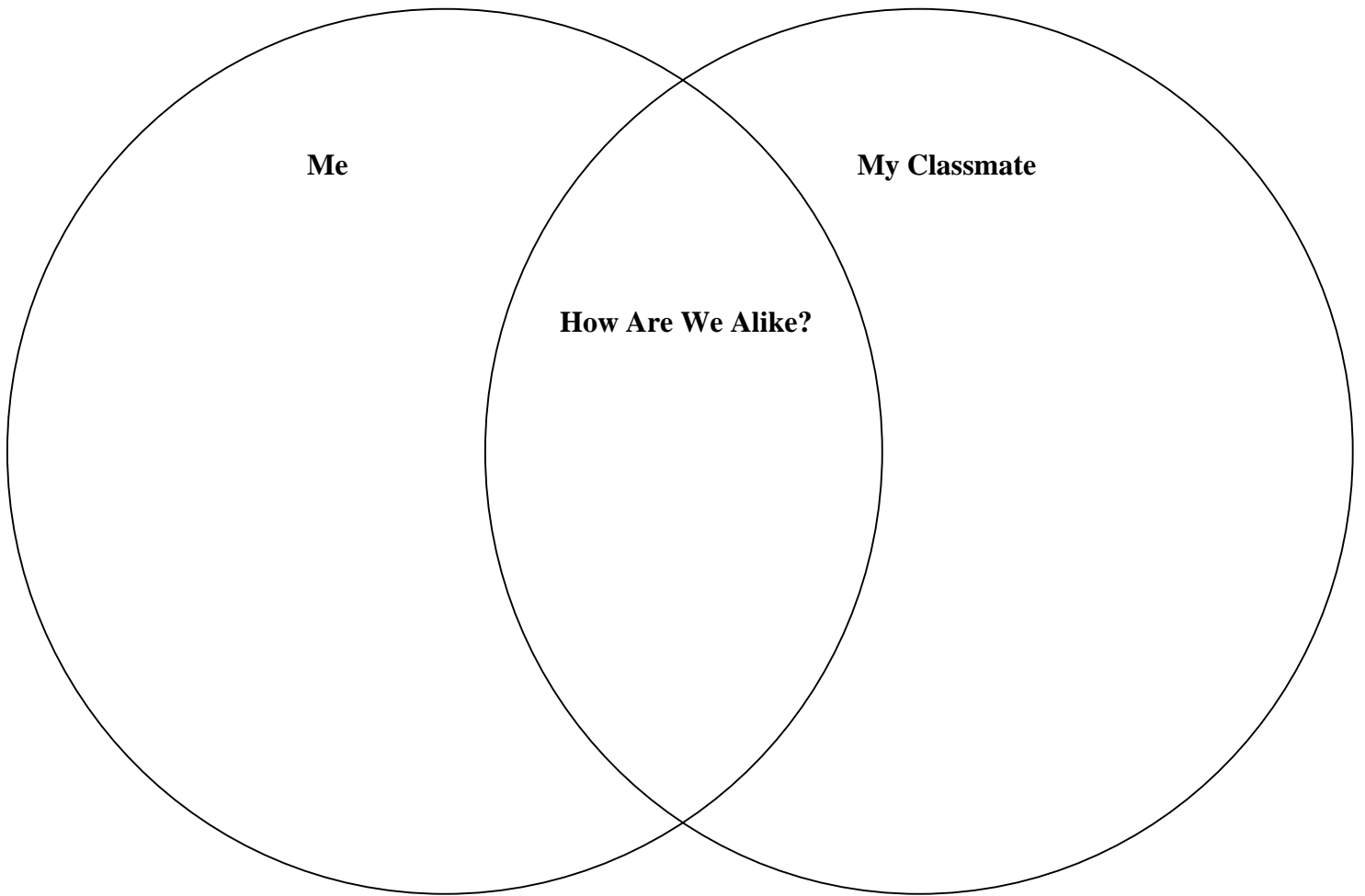
Teacher Activities	Student Activities	Assessments
<hr/> <p>Conduct a discussion on creating a rubric to grade the work on this unit. (See sample, attachment 14.) Have students help determine how the projects should be graded.</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p>Participate in class discussion on creating a rubric. Be careful as you decide how your work and your group's work should be graded.</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p>Teacher observation of class discussion</p> <p>Completed rubric</p> <hr/>
<p>Collect all work and grade it according to rubric developed with students Conduct one final discussion on how the students think they could work together as a class to help people in their school and community become more tolerant and understanding of the individual differences and rights of others.</p>	<p>Discuss together and plan what things you and your classmates can do to help people in your school and community become more tolerant and understanding of the individual differences and rights of others.</p>	<p>Teacher observation</p>

8. Differentiation of Instruction

The length of the assignments can be adjusted to differentiate for students with varying ability levels. Students with special needs (ESL students, students with disabilities or academic plans) can utilize peer tutoring, assistance from parent volunteers, partner reading, individualized teacher instruction, and taped recordings of the stories used in the unit.

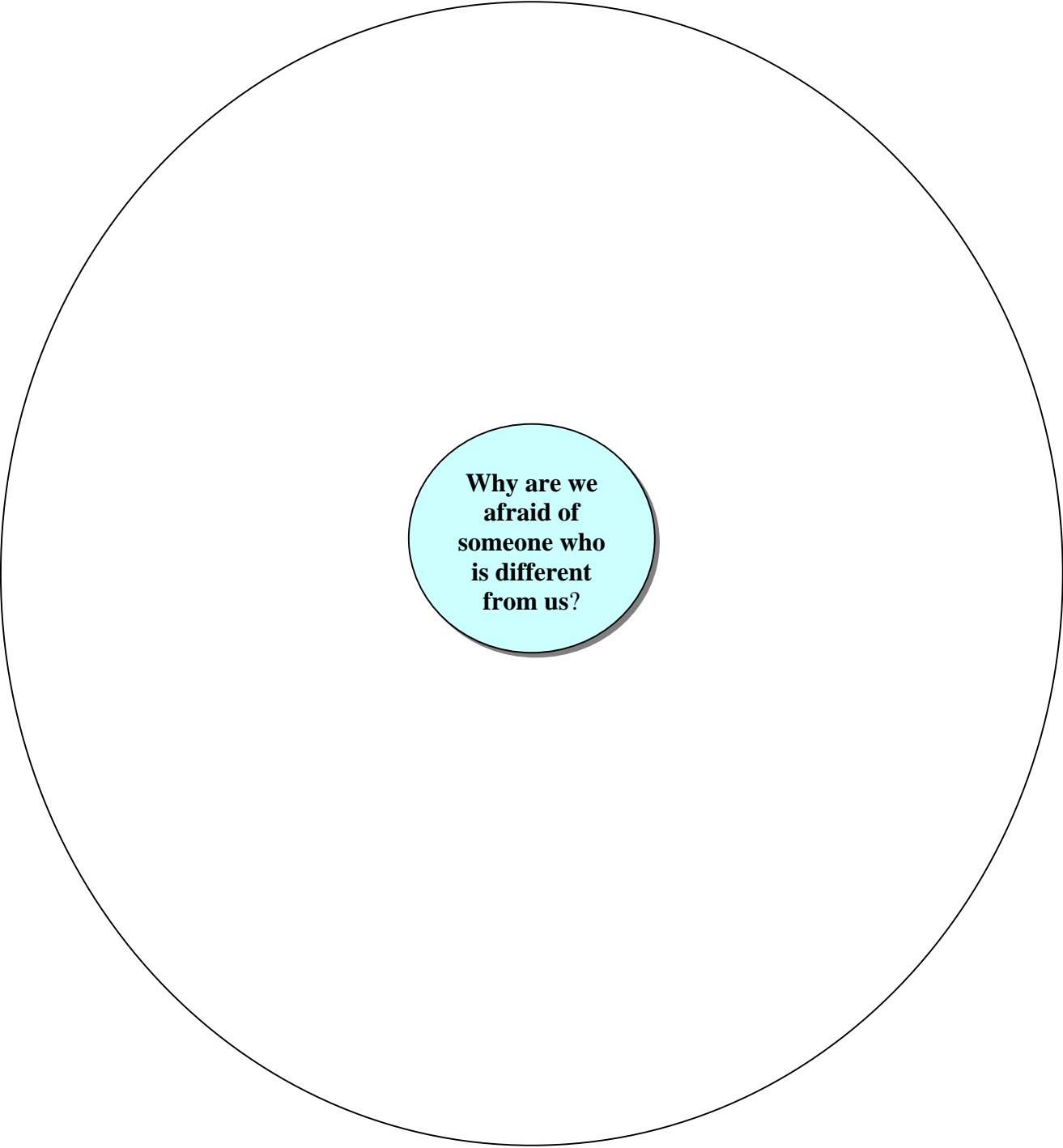
Gifted students can work as peer tutors for students with special needs. They can be given the responsibility of group leaders when working in small groups. They can be encouraged to create maps of their own journeys and make oral presentations to the class.

Attachment 1
Venn Diagram



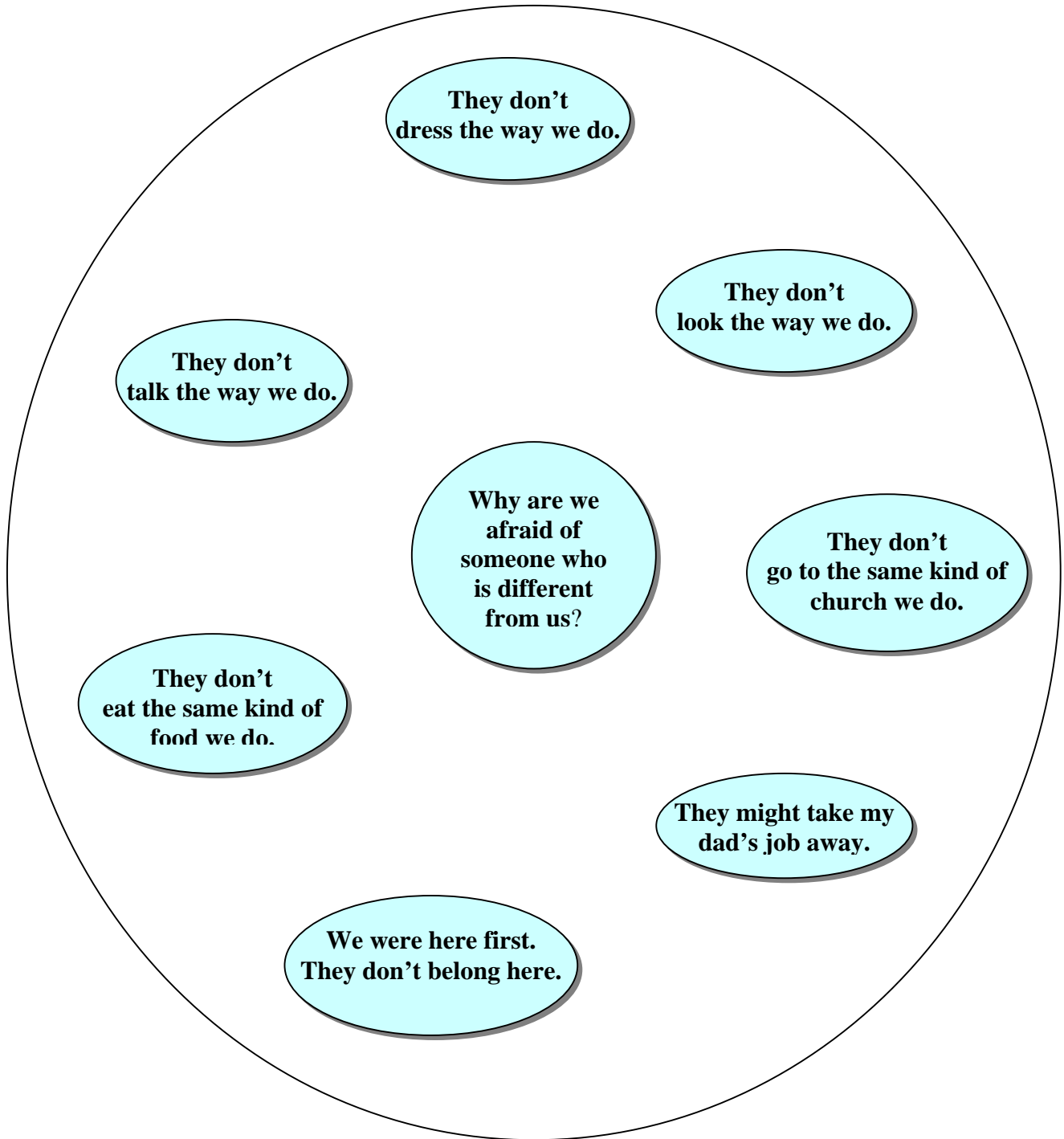
Attachment 2

Circle Map 1

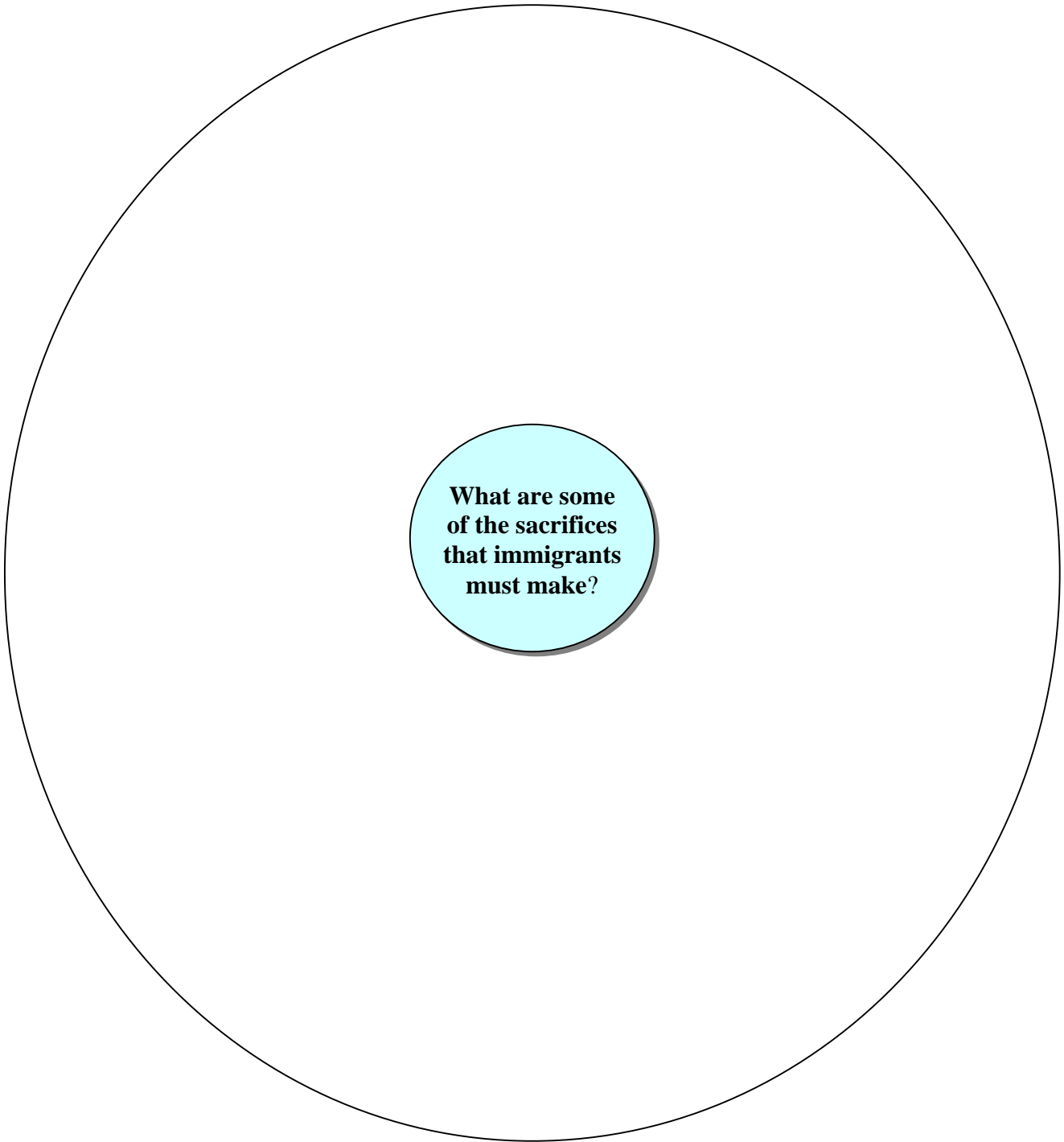


Attachment 3

Teacher Resource: Sample Circle Map 1

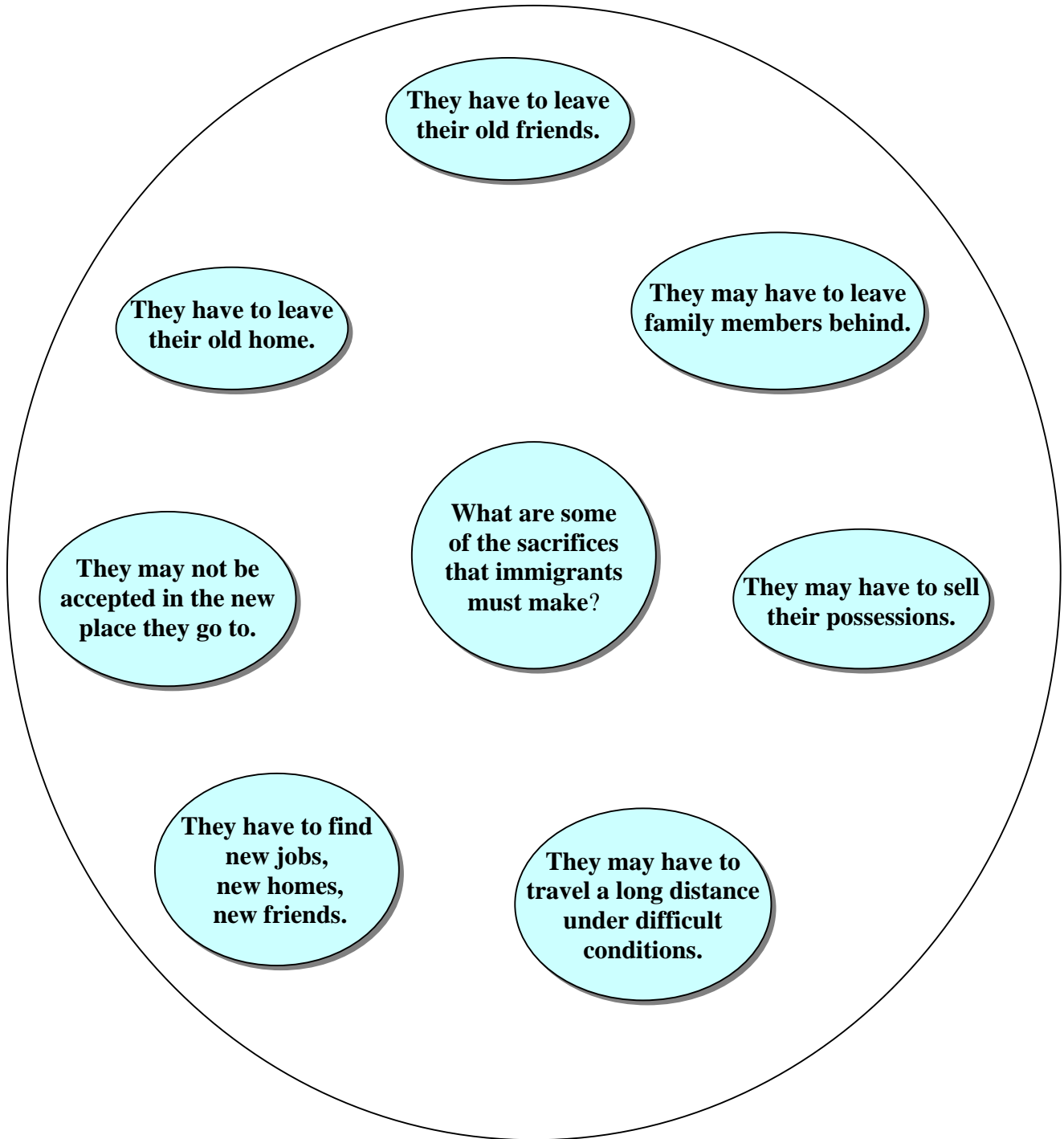


Attachment 4
Circle Map 2



Attachment 5

Teacher Resource: Sample Circle Map 2



Attachment 6

Teacher Resource Information

In general, people tend to be afraid of, or to stay away from, someone who is different from themselves. This sense of unease probably comes from a lack of information or understanding. Can you remember an instance when you thought that you would not like a certain person, before you even got to know him or her? It is a failing of human nature that we prejudge each other. It is this rush to judge others that gets us into trouble and can lead to our missing wonderful experiences because we can make errors in judgment.

Children learn their prejudices from the adults in their lives. We cannot do much about the home environment in which our children live, but we can do our part to make our children more rational, thinking persons who value and respect others on the basis of who they are and not on some other criteria. This lesson is designed to help students think more carefully about why we do certain things but not others and why we like certain people but not others. As you go through the lesson activities with your students, keep trying to get them to think about how other people feel about things that happen and how they might feel if they were in the other person's place.

As part of a group sponsored by the Goethe Institute in July, 2001, I was able to visit a very fine school in Fürth, Bavaria, Germany. Known as the Helene-Lange-Gymnasium Fürth, this is a school designed to meet the academic needs of the brightest students in the area. These students are motivated, capable, and articulate. The educators who were with me on this trip enjoyed being able to speak at length with students who were concerned about their world enough to attempt to do something about some of the problems. These students shared with us about a project they had been working on for several years called "School without Racism—School of Courage." This program has had an impact on the thoughts and feelings of the students at the school. All of the students with whom we spoke told us that they look at their neighbors in a new way and that they have more tolerance for the differences among them.

The following are some of the activities the students generated for the program's summer celebration:

- guest speakers from the native countries of some of the new immigrants to Fürth;
- instruction in the culture—music, art, literature, clothing, geography, food, and so on—of the native countries of the new immigrants;
- a poster contest with the theme "My best friend is a foreigner";
- posters and signs saying "welcome" in many languages;
- role-play activities to create awareness of problems the immigrants face;
- posters and pictures all over the school with positive images and messages; and
- an interactive game involving the entire school in a music and dance routine performed to "We Are the World."

Attachment 7

Individual Differences

Ever since World War II ended, Germany has been facing racism and prejudice head-on. The years following the Nazi Holocaust left the German people with a great burden of guilt and a need to accept responsibility for their actions. They have worked very hard to overcome the prejudices that led to the Holocaust. The end of the war also brought to Germany many immigrant groups seeking asylum because they knew of that country's willingness to accept them. In addition, through an agreement with the Turkish government, groups of men were transported into Germany to help fill the immense void created in the labor force by the war's impact on the male population. Today, Turks make up Germany's largest ethnic minority. In the turbulent world of the past few decades, many other ethnic groups have made their way to Germany. Large numbers of Slavs and Eastern Europeans, for example, were making their way to Germany even before the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain came down in 1989. Since that time, Germany seems to have had a flood of refugees and immigrants arriving daily. As a result of the shifting of populations, Germany has increasingly become a melting pot like the United States. Today, there is no "typical German," any more than there is a "typical American."

Following reunification, the German government began a number of programs to aid in the resettlement of its refugee populations. Having been in Germany long enough to begin applying for citizenship, these large numbers of foreigners present real problems for the government. They must be housed, clothed, fed, educated, and given jobs. Several government groups have been created to help meet the needs of these newcomers. While such agencies have solved part of the problem, there is another issue that needs addressing: the attitude of the German people toward the newcomers. The German government realizes that its citizens must be educated and persuaded to accept their diverse population of immigrants before the problem can be completely solved.

The best place to begin any program to get people to change their minds about an issue is in the schools, with the young people. That is the reason for educational programs such as School without Racism—School of Courage. There are also public service announcements on the television and in the newspapers and magazines. All around Germany, one can see posters stressing that individual differences are good and not to be feared.

After reading this information and discussing it as a class, look at the poster on the handout titled "What Is So Great about Typical, Anyway?" and think about what it says. Then write a paragraph telling what the poster means to you. As a class, you may wish to design a schoolwide or class program that will attempt to do the same things that the students at the Helene-Lange-Gymnasium Fürth have done.

For more information on the School without Racism—School of Courage program at the Helene-Lange-Gymnasium Fürth, you may contact the school by e-mail at this address: hlg@helene-lange.g.fue.by.schule.de.

Attachment 8

What Is So Great about Typical, Anyway?



This poster, created in Germany and seen in many public buildings in that country, contains a very important message about celebrating our differences. The poster says that all three girls are “Typical Germans.” The girl on the left is Slavic, the one in the middle is from an African nation, and the one on the right is Turkish. Individuals these three ethnic groups are now found in abundance in Germany.

Remember that Adolf Hitler’s Aryan dream was for the “typical German” to be blond with blue eyes. But this dream, like many of his others, failed. Today, Germany is a rich cultural blend, much as the way the United States is.

Write a paragraph explaining what this poster means to you. Do you think that it is making a good point? Is there really a typical Germany, any more than there is a typical American?

Attachment 9

Stamping Out Racism

The two posters pictured below were displayed on the walls in a classroom in the Helene-Lange-Gymnasium Fürth in Germany. They were part of a classroom assignment related to the program titled “School without Racism—School of Courage.” The message on the posters is that even though negative attitudes and behaviors are a part of Germany’s past, they should not be a part of its present or its future. The German students acknowledged that there are skinheads and white supremacist groups in Germany today, but they understand that such racist groups should be ignored and their influence erased. Note the swastika (the Nazi symbol) near the center of both posters. One is being stamped out, and the other is being trashed. What do you think the students who made these posters were trying to say?



Attachment 10

Sixth-Grade Classroom in Fürth, Germany

These sixth graders in Fürth, Germany, are involved in a lesson on Kaiser Constantine—or Emperor Constantine, as he is known to Americans. What things do you notice about the classroom and the students? Compare and contrast them to the things you see on the handout titled “Fifth-Grade Classroom in Hanahan, South Carolina.”



Attachment 11

Fifth-Grade Classroom in Hanahan, South Carolina

These fifth graders in Hanahan, South Carolina, are involved in a lesson titled “Bridging Our Differences.” The lesson expresses the need for everyone to do his or her part and to pull together in order to accomplish a goal. What things do you notice about the classroom and the students? Compare and contrast them to the things you see in the pictures on the handout titled “Sixth-Grade Classroom in Fürth, Germany.”



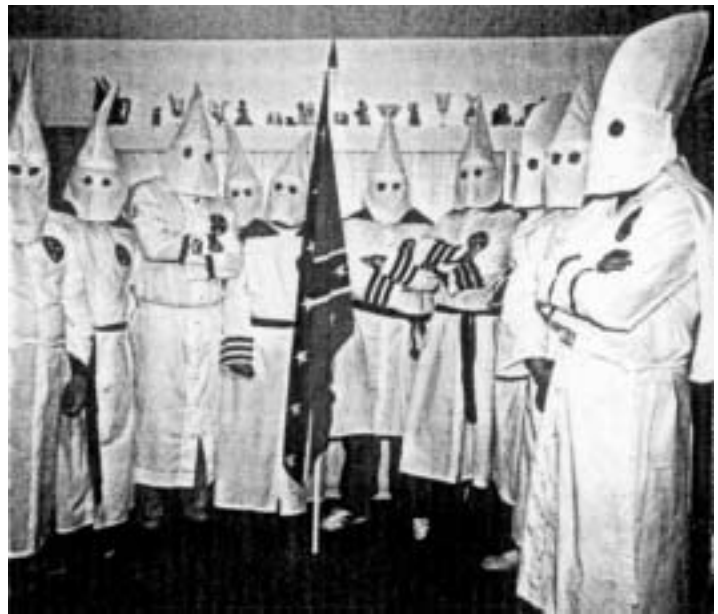
Attachment 12

Not Everyone Agrees

There are many different groups in the world today who do not want people to get along with each other. Some want to continue the racial and ethnic strife that has happened in the past. The people pictured below are members of groups who have never learned that we can be friends with people who are different from us. Those who seek to be friends only with people who look just like themselves miss out on many good things in life. Look at the people in the pictures and discuss what you think they are trying to say by the way they dress. Why do you think they do not like people who are different from them? What would you say to them about making friends with many different kinds of people and about celebrating our diversity? Create a poster that contains your brief message to people about how you feel.



Skinheads (White Supremacists)



Ku Klux Klansmen (White Supremacists)

Attachment 13
Student Checklist

Name: _____

Date: _____

Draw a 😊 when you complete each part:

_____ I listened to the read-alouds and discussed them with my group.

_____ I completed my Venn diagram.

_____ I worked with my group to complete Circle Map 1

_____ I worked with my group to complete Circle Map 2.

_____ I participated in the discussion about why people want to immigrate to another country.

_____ I wrote a paragraph after reading the handout “Individual Differences.”

_____ I wrote a paragraph about the poster on the handout titled “What Is So Great about Typical, Anyway?”

_____ I participated in the discussion about the handout titled “Stamping Out Racism.”

_____ I worked with my group to compare and contrast the handouts titled “Sixth-Grade Classroom in Fürth, Germany” and “Fifth-Grade Classroom in Hanahan, South Carolina.”

_____ I wrote a paragraph describing what I noticed on the “Sixth-Grade Classroom in Fürth, Germany” and the “Fifth-Grade Classroom in Hanahan, South Carolina” handouts.

_____ I discussed with my group the two pictures on the handout titled “Not Everyone Agrees.”

_____ I made a poster containing my message telling why we should celebrate our differences.

_____ I participated in the role-play activities.

_____ I conducted an interview with someone from another region and shared the responses with the class.

_____ I worked with my group to help foster understanding between different ethnic and racial groups in my school and community.

Attachment 14

Sample Rubric for Scoring the Project Work

- 5** The project work on this lesson by this student is truly **exceptional**. The student has **exceeded** the requirements outlined in the assignment and has spent an **extraordinary** amount of time to complete the work. The student demonstrates a clear understanding of the message contained in this lesson. His or her work clearly shows effort and creativity. Everything about the project is **impressive**.
- 4** The project work on this lesson by this student is **above average**. The student has **exceeded to some extent** the requirements outlined in the assignment. It is evident that the student took **care and effort** to complete the project. The student has done a **commendable job** of completing the required tasks. The work produced by the student demonstrates that he or she understands the message of the lesson.
- 3** The project work on this lesson by this student is **average**. The project **meets the requirements** outlined in the assignment but does not go beyond what is required. **Reasonable care and effort** are shown. The student has some understanding of the message included in this lesson activities.
- 2** The project work on this lesson by this student is **below average**. Parts of the assignment are **incomplete or inadequate**. The project shows **minimal time and effort** put forth by the student. The student has achieved only a small degree of understanding of the message contained in the lesson.
- 1** The project work on this lesson by this student is **poorly done**. The work is **far below average**. Parts of the project are **incomplete or missing**. **Little or no time and effort** were put forth by the student. It is apparent the student does not understand the lesson and the message it was teaching.

Attachment 15

Books for the Teacher to Read Aloud

Bunting, Eve. *Dreaming of America: An Ellis Island Story*. Mahwah, NJ: BridgeWater Books, 2001.

———. *How Many Days to America?: A Thanksgiving Story*. New York: Clarion Books, 1988.

Hest, Amy. *When Jessie Came across the Sea*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 1997.

Levitin, Sonia. *A Piece of Home*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1996.